



**ALEX VONG
APPOINTED
CUSTOMS
SERVICE
HEAD**

▲ P3



**VISITOR SPENDING
DOWN**

Visitor spending excluding gaming decreased 17.2 percent from MOP61.75 billion in 2014 to MOP51.15 billion last year

▲ P4 TOURISM



**DEBT SEEN RISING
THROUGH 2019**

China's ratio of debt to its economic size is seen climbing for at least another four years

▲ P11

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"THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'"

WORLD BRIEFS

CHINA's top securities regulator Xiao Gang will step down following months of turmoil in Chinese stock markets that battered faith in Beijing's economic management. The departure of Xiao, a legal expert with decades of experience in the finance industry, may help assuage public anger at the dramatic boom and bust, but doesn't address the market's underlying problems. [More on p10](#)



UK British voters will choose whether to remain in the EU on June 23 after what is expected to be a feverish campaign. Most gov't heavyweights back PM David Cameron's call to stay in.

[More on backpage](#)

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F1

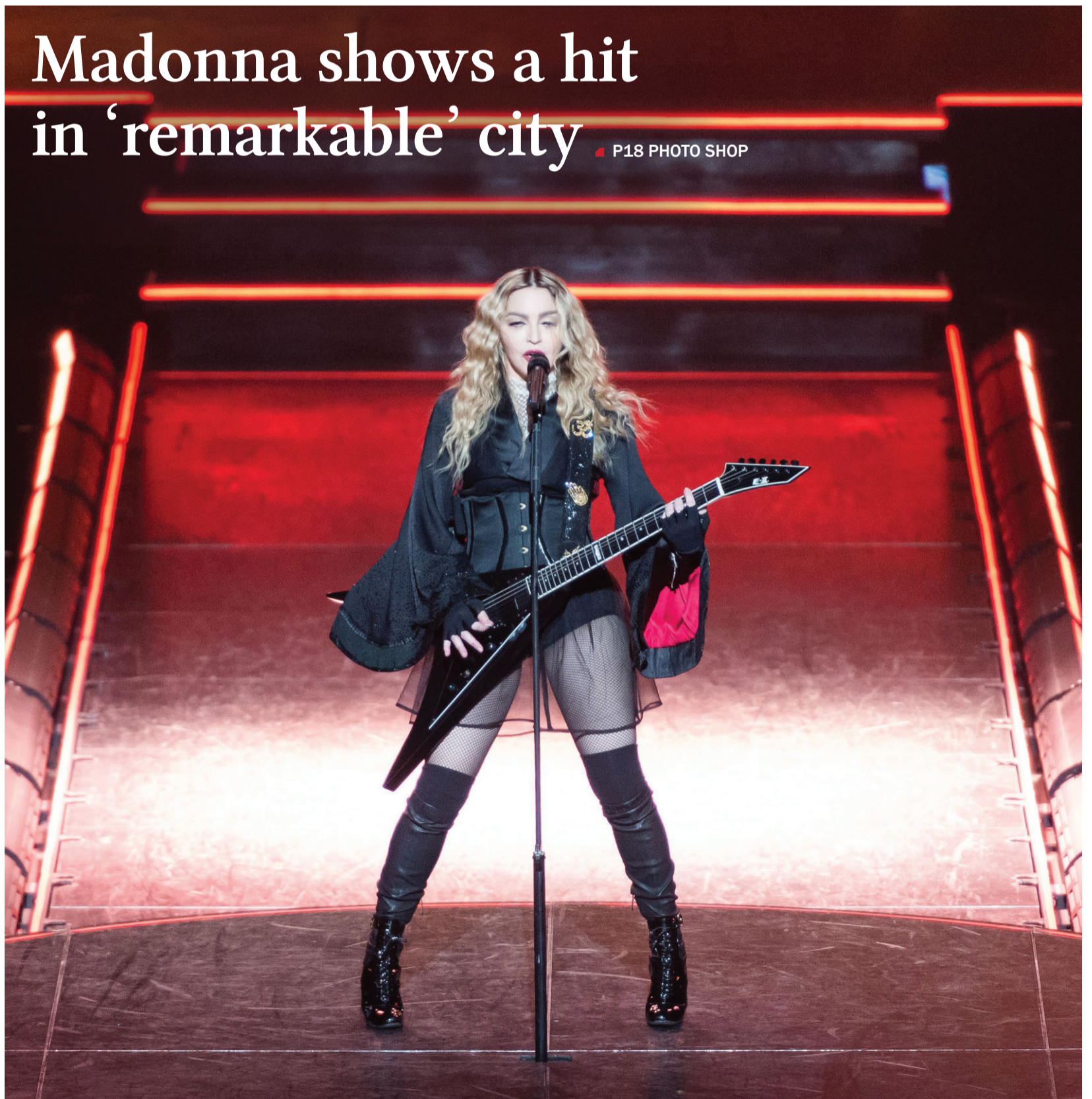
'POP-UP CANADA!' STARTS TODAY

Exports to Macau grew 14-fold to MOP337m

▲ P7 EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Madonna shows a hit in 'remarkable' city

▲ P18 PHOTO SHOP





Gov't grants Parisian extension

The Macau government has granted Sands China Ltd an extension to complete the construction on their Parisian Macao, according to a statement by the Land, Public Works and Transport Bureau made to Tribuna de Macau. The deadline has been extended to November 2016, despite the requirement for the property to be completed by April. Sands China notified authorities in May last year that they would be unlikely to meet their April deadline, and requested an extension for a later date in 2016. Sands China began construction on the USD2.7 billion-resort back in February 2013. According to information released previously, The Parisian Macao will feature an integrated resort with about 3,000 rooms and suites. It will also offer meeting spaces, restaurants, retail shops, a spa and health club, a children's club, two observation decks and a pool deck that includes Aquaworld, a themed water park aiming to attract mostly business, leisure and family travelers.

HK Secretary Raymond Tam visited Macau

The HK Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Secretary, Raymond Tam, visited Macau last week where he met with the territory's Secretary for Economy and Finance, Leong Vai Tac. According to a government statement, both secretaries exchanged ideas on issues of common interest, such as "13th Five-Year Plan, the cooperation between the regions of the Pan-Pearl River Delta, the construction of free trade zones in Guangdong, the support policies for entrepreneurship and youth employment, among others." Both leaders recognized the interdependence of Hong Kong and Macau, and agreed that it is essential to strengthen cooperation between the two territories in the spirit of mutual help and cooperation. The Macau tour ended with a visit to the Seac Pai Van public housing where Tam met briefly with the vice president of the Macau Housing Bureau, Kuoc Vai Han.

Filmmakers optimistic over region's cinema

A press conference was held at the Science Center last week ahead of the Macau premiere of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Sword of Destiny," which screened on Thursday night at Galaxy Macau's UA cinema. During the event, artists and filmmakers including Thomas Lim, Carlos Koo and Sharon Lok shared their opinions on various matters relating to film, such as why sequels do not usually outperform the original in a series. They also discussed their opinions with some artists remarking that they were optimistic about the future of Macau cinema. They commended government support for initiatives promoting the local film industry. "Sword of Destiny" is an American-Chinese martial arts sequel to Ang Lee's surprise international success, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," which grossed USD128 million in box office sales in the U.S. The movie remains one of the highest-grossing foreign-language films in U.S. history to date.

COURTS

Alan Ho gave orders to investigate Lisboa's prostitution ring

Renato Marques

THE Hotel Lisboa had received and handled complaints from women who were being asked to pay to access a "working room" in the hotel, says the former General Manager, Samuel Yeung. Mr Yeung also revealed that Alan Ho had requested for those complaints to be investigated.

These are two of the facts that have come to light after the latest session of the trial that involves six defendants accused of being part of a prostitution ring that operated in Hotel Lisboa. These defendants include its former executive director, Alan Ho.

Several witnesses related to the suspects Peter Lun and Alan Ho, who is Stanley Ho's nephew, were heard during the court session that took place at the Court of First Instance (TJB) on Friday. The highlights of the day came with the examination of the former Hotel Lisboa General Manager, Samuel Yeung, who worked in the hotel for 18 years, prior to Peter Lun.

The former head manager, who is close to Alan Ho, and with whom he is said to have had daily meetings, explained to the court in more detail the functions and working duties of the several managerial positions at Hotel Lisboa, as well as his working relationship with the first defendant.

Yeung said that on several occasions the hotel received complaints accusing several people of extorting money from the prostitutes to enable them to work at the hotel, and said that those cases were always taken seriously by the administration and were investigated as much as possible. He added: "In 2012 or 2013 we had several meetings about this topic with Mr Alan Ho in several instances.

"Firstly there were complaints about the security, then about some of the managers. Mr Ho asked me to investigate all those accusations. I called the numbers to learn more about [the matter] and delivered the information to Mr Lun," he recalled, saying that he resorted on several occasions to reviewing recordings from CCTV in order to try to find relevant ins-

tances, but found nothing on those recordings that could sustain those accusations.

Yeung also mentioned that later there were other accusations of the same kind that arrived by email. Questioned by the judge Rui Ribeiro, the witness said that they replied to the emails and tried to request any evidence from those people, but nothing was received.

Similar to a previously examined witness (Lam Wa), Yeung portrayed Alan Ho as a hardworking, zealous and honest man, dedicated to work and to the large number of positions and working duties he has held in almost all the companies of the groups headed by the gaming tycoon Stanley Ho, both in Macau and abroad.

According to Yeung, the limitations applied to the use of rooms on

other times it was not, depending on the needs of the hotel. He further explained that the counter was not exclusive to the YSL, but was also used for the checking in and out of large groups of people in order to avoid complications and the accumulation of people at the other counters throughout the hotel. The counter also served as a point for complaints to be reported.

Yeung said the use of that counter or the "normal" front-desk was based only on the number of people using the counters, and particularly the number of YSL who were searching for a room.

He said also that during the time he worked in the hotel, he never heard of any other means of determining suitability of guests besides the presence of their name, or lack thereof, on the hotel "Black List," a list which included names of guests who had caused trouble or damage to the hotel.

Questioned by the lawyer Rui Sousa as to whether at any time the police authorities had made any recommendation to the hotel not to accept certain clients who would use the rooms for prostitution, Yeung said "No, never!" He added that every time the police conducted operations or searches of the hotel, they never explained why they were doing it or, subsequent to that, any outcomes of those operations.

As he explained to the court: "They [the police] just invited the girls to go to the police station, after which some would return and others would not, or would return escorted by the police officers to do the check-out. We never understood why. We suspected that it had to do with a visa expiration or overstay, but we were never informed of that by anyone from the police," Samuel Yeung said.

Another of the witnesses who provided evidence on Friday was the Chief Executive Officer of SJM Holdings, Ambrose So, who reaffirmed description of Alan Ho as a fair and honest person.

So said that he had heard Alan Ho saying that he wanted to give a "cleaner image" to the hotel and that the prostitutes were affecting that image.

Ambrose So described Alan Ho as a fair and honest person

Hotel Lisboa's fifth and sixth floors came down to a management decision taken around 2004-2005 due to a large number of complaints from hotel guests regarding noise and continuous movement in the corridors. Until then, there were no limitations at all for the women dedicated to the prostitution business in the hotel, and they could occupy any room like any other hotel client. Those women were known at the hotel by the nickname Young Single Ladies (YSL).

The former manager also explained that those floors were not for exclusive use by the YSL; there was another area with around 20 to 30 other rooms available to any customer, which was usually used by agency tour groups.

Regarding the so-called "Assistant Manager Desk" (AM Desk), the counter indicated in previous sessions of the trial as being the "special" location for registration of the YSL, the former manager said that sometimes it was used and at

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Alex Vong appointed new Customs Service head

ALX Vong, the former president of the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau's (IACM) administrative committee, has been appointed the new Customs Service (SA) Director in a decision announced by the Chief Executive (CE), Chui Sai On, on Saturday. He will be inaugurated today at a ceremony to be held at the government's headquarters.

In a speech to announce the appointment, Chui said that the process of picking Alex Vong had been concluded on Friday (February 19). He also highlighted that a well-run SA is of the upmost importance.

During the press conference held at the government headquarters, the CE mentioned that the decision to appoint Vong for this position was based on the requirements of the Basic Law, which stipulates that the person who is to be appointed to these duties "must have appropriate qualities and skills for this role, in particular, political abilities, responsibility, ability for political decision-making, coordination skills, as well as experience and effective administrative management."

After weighing all these factors, Vong was chosen and the request was sent to the Central Government, which gave its green light.

The Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, who has been taking on these duties as acting Director of SA since the end of October last year, said at the



Alex Vong

same event that he was "in complete agreement with the nomination and convinced that Alex Vong has the ability to lead SA and start working effectively."

The newly appointed director used the occasion to praise the professionalism of the SA team, "whose work," Vong said, "had important effects in the protection and security of the community and in economic development." He added that it would be "a pleasure to be able to cooperate with this [customs] team."

Vong also noted the "many challenges" that the Customs Service faces currently with the allocation of a larger jurisdiction in Macau's maritime areas;

he considers the prevention and surveillance of maritime areas to be "a new mission".

Vong concluded by highlighting the need for "full cooperation and dedication of all staff of the SA" in

order to achieve expected goals.

With this new appointment, the Customs Service may be able to return to normality. This comes

Alex Vong joined the public administration in 1994

after the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, was appointed as acting director on October 30 last year, prompted by the sudden death of the former director, Lai Man Wa, which was classified by the authorities as suicide by asphyxiation.

Aged 49, Alex Vong was born in Macau and has served in leading positions at the IACM and the Macau Sport Development Board. He joined the public administration in 1994. **RM**

VONG'S APPOINTMENT BRINGS CHANGES IN IACM AND SPORT DEVELOPMENT BOARD

WITH ALEX Vong moving from the position of president at IACM to that of director at SA, other restructuring within government departments have become necessary. Therefore, to occupy the vacant position of IACM president, the executive have

chosen José Tavares, who was previously President of the Macau Sport Development Board (ID), a post in turn previously held by Vong. In light of this change, the former vice-president of the ID, Pun Weng Kun, now assumes the presidency of the ID.

No legal revision for real estate sector

The government has no immediate plans to revise the legal framework governing the private real estate market, according to the Secretary for Transport and Public Works, Raimundo do Rosário. Speaking to the media on the sidelines of an event last week, the secretary indicated that authorities do not plan to modify the rules governing the sale of units in buildings under construction, nor do they plan to alter any other regulations that applies to the private real estate sector. However, he added that the local authorities would continue to monitor the development of and changes to, the local property market.

Macau Post to issue one million CNY stamps



XINHUA

Starting from today at 9 a.m., Macau Post will issue 1 million stamps for the "Lunar Year of the Monkey." The number of stamps issued is the highest in the four years since the postal services began issuing stamps designed in accordance with the Chinese zodiac sign. According to the regulations, interested parties are allowed to buy 20 sets of stamps, each set containing four stamps, and are allowed to buy another three label stamps. The Macau Post director, Lau Wai Meng, indicated that since the Chinese zodiac sign stamps have been a hit, they decided to issue double the number of stamps that they printed for last year's themed design.

Macau accused of handing over HK residents

LAW enforcement agencies in Macau have reportedly used extrajudicial means to extradite at least three people to mainland authorities since 2007. The South China Morning Post reported yesterday that two of them are permanent residents of Hong Kong, citing court documents and sources.

The newspaper describes how on March 18, 2007, a woman took a ferry from Hong Kong to Macau and was intercepted by immigration officials "to collaborate in an investigation," according to a court document. The following day, Macau's Prosecution Office agreed to turn over the woman (red-flagged by Interpol for tax evasion) to mainland authorities.

The Court of Final Appeal (TUI) ruled in 2007 that it was illegal to return fugitives to mainland Chinese authorities.

Another case unfolded on February 6, 2008, when a woman, also a permanent resident of Hong Kong, who allegedly committed a burglary on the mainland, was arrested while entering Macau.

TUI issued another similar ruling: "This court having already decided [...] in 2007 that it was illegal to return fugitives to

mainland China authorities [...] it was insisted that the return would proceed, without a law or agreement, without an organized process, without allowing the defendant's defense and without an order from a judge. These acts discredit the justice system, undermine the rule of law and do not confer prestige to the Macau SAR."

Yet another case caused controversy in Macau when a Chinese fugitive, Wu Quansheng, had his residency status in Macau revoked by the Secretary for Economy and Finance's Office. Wu Quansheng was eventually expelled from Macau, although the SAR and mainland China are yet to sign an extradition treaty, as the Times reported.

Discussions to produce such a treaty have been in the works for around two-and-a-half years and are expected to conclude this year.

A Macau-based lawyer, who wishes to remain anonymous, told the SCMP, "The agreement is to legitimize what they [the agencies] have already been doing, because they know it's illegal."

Benny Tai, an associate professor of law at



The Court of Final Appeal

the University of Hong Kong who initiated the "Occupy Central with Love and Peace" campaign in January 2013, said that there were reasons for "grave concern." He added that the Hong Kong government could not guarantee that HKSAR residents handed over to Macau as part of an inter-SAR extradition agreement would not be illegally relocated to the mainland.

"The jurisdictional integrity of Hong Kong and Macau as well as the rule of law in both jurisdictions are both seriously degraded by these extrajudicial kidnappings," Hong Kong lawyer Michael Vidler told the SCMP. **Staff reporter**

Expat employee wins lawsuit over labor dispute

The Court of Second Instance ruled that a company must pay more than MOP200,000 to one of its expat employees. TDM reported that the worker, a British passport holder, made a verbal agreement with the company when being recruited, in which the company pledged to offer him MOP40,000 per month in salary and housing allowance. However, the expatriate reported only receiving approximately MOP10,000 per month. The company had appealed to the Court of Second Instance, but the court upheld the original decision.

STATISTICS | TOURISM

Visitor spending decreased 17.2 percent in 2015

FOR the entire year of 2015, visitor spending excluding gaming decreased 17.2 percent from MOP61.75 billion in 2014 to MOP51.15 billion last year, according to the Statistics and Census Service (DSEC). The agency says that this represents the first annual decline since the data was first released in 2010.

Non-gaming visitor spending of overnight visitors (MOP40.17 billion) dropped 21.1 percent while that of same-day visitors (MOP10.96 billion) increased by 0.9 percent over the course of the year.

Visitor spending excluding gaming fell by 7.1 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015 when compared with the same period in 2014, amounting to MOP13.05 billion. At the same time, fourth-quarter spending rose by 4.7 percent from MOP12.47



Customers look at watches for sale in a store in Macau

billion in the third quarter of 2015.

The fourth quarter of 2015 saw a per capita spending increase of 7.8 percent over the third quarter, but a 5.5-percent year-on-year decline. Mainland visitors spent 4.9 percent less per capita than they did during

the same period in 2014. Likewise, per capita spending of visitors from Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, the U.S. and the U.K. registered annual decreases, while those from Australia increased marginally by 1 percent year-on-year.

Analyzed by consumption structure, visitors

spent mainly on shopping (46 percent), accommodation (25.5 percent) and food & beverage (20.4 percent) in the last quarter of 2015. The consumption structure was broadly similar to that registered during the third quarter.

Visitor satisfaction toward various services declined considerably during the fourth quarter of 2015 when compared with the previous one. The proportion of visitors satisfied with the services of hotels (87.9 percent), gaming establishments (83 percent) and retail shops (81.7 percent) dropped by 0.9, 1.2 and 3.4 percentage points, respectively.

Those satisfied with travel agency services (78.5 percent) and public transport services (67.8 percent) both fell substantially by 7.5 and 4.7 percentage points, respectively.

L'Arc theft allegedly involves 'Broken Tooth' VIP room

ANOTHER incident of internal gaming theft in Macau was revealed over the weekend after it transpired that the L'Arc Macau casino had notified the police that it had been a victim of theft in one of the casino's VIP rooms.

According to Hong Kong's Economic Journal, the Judiciary Police received a report estimating the loss of around HKD1 million from a VIP room at the L'Arc casino, which operates under an SJM license.

The VIP room reportedly operated a "profit-sharing area," whereby an operator and junket partners share profits and losses at these tables at a predetermined ratio. The employee alleged to be behind the theft was responsible for looking after these shared tables.

It is the second case of internal theft at L'Arc Macau this year, though it is significantly smaller than the HKD99.7 million-theft reported by a senior executive at the affected junket last month. An article on gaming news website Calvin Ayre reports that the theft occurred in a VIP room allegedly controlled by Wan "Broken Tooth" Kuok-koi - the former leader of the notorious 14K Triad.

Wan's release in December 2012, after serving a 14-year sentence for illegal gambling, loansharking and criminal association, saw the former triad leader announce the resumption of his activities in Macau's junket industry. More recent reports confirmed that Wan had opened a new VIP room in an unidentified casino, which the Economic Journal reported on Thursday to be the L'Arc casino. **Staff reporter**

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Ken Ritter, Las Vegas

COURTS

A judge said that billionaire casino magnate and Las Vegas newspaper owner Sheldon Adelson can be questioned for up to 49 hours beginning this week by lawyers for a former Macau casino executive who claims he was wrongly fired in 2010.

A lawyer for former Sands China chief executive Steven Jacobs said in court that he expects an attempt by Adelson and his lawyers to disrupt the sworn deposition in an effort to scuttle plans to begin the long-awaited civil trial June 27. The questioning won't be in open court.

"We will start with Mr. Adelson, and then there will be a blow-up in an attempt to obstruct this deposition so it cannot be done," Jacobs' attorney, Todd Bice, told Clark County District Court Judge Elizabeth Gonzalez.

Outside court, Bice said he believes it's clear that Adelson and lawyers for Las Vegas Sands and Sands China Ltd. want a delay.

Jacobs has also been un-

Sheldon Adelson facing 49 hours of pretrial questions

dergoing days of pretrial questioning by attorneys for Adelson, Las Vegas Sands Corp. and Sands China Ltd.

Jacobs contends he was fired by Adelson and Las Vegas Sands in an attempt to cover up improper activities by the company in the Chinese gambling enclave of Macau.

Adelson and Sands deny wrongdoing. Attorneys for Adelson and the companies declined to comment outside court. A spokesman for Las Vegas Sands didn't immediately respond to Bice's claim about delaying tactics.

There was no talk in the courtroom about a ruling Wednesday by Chief Clark County District Court Judge David Barker keeping Gonzalez on the case. But

a statement from Sands Las Vegas said the company will appeal Barker's ruling to the Nevada Supreme Court.

The judge has clashed numerous times with Adelson lawyers in the Jacobs case

It would be the 12th pretrial issue taken to the state high court, and it also could delay trial if the justices order a halt

to proceedings pending a decision.

The case has also spawned several related cases, including a defamation claim and a federal lawsuit filed last month by Jacobs.

Attorneys for Las Vegas Sands have argued in the state court case that Gonzalez should be disqualified for "personal dealings with the press" and for letting Jacobs' lawyers make inquiries about the Adelson family buying the Las Vegas Review-Journal newspaper in December.

Gonzalez has issued statements denying bias. She filed a document last week declaring she "will continue to be fair and impartial toward all parties in this case."



Las Vegas Sands Corp. Chairman and CEO Sheldon Adelson

The purchase of the Review-Journal came weeks after several reporters were assigned by then-owners Gatehouse Media LLC to investigate Gonzalez and two other Las Vegas judges not involved in Adelson litigation.

No story appeared in the Review-Journal, but a small Connecticut newspaper headed by an executive affiliated with Gatehouse published a story about specialized business courts that criticized Gonzalez for "inconsistent" and "contradictory" rulings.

The judge has clashed

numerous times with Adelson lawyers in the Jacobs case.

She sanctioned the legal team last year for "misrepresentations and lack of candor" and failing to turn over documents. They were ordered to pay USD250,000 to legal charities and cover court costs incurred by Jacobs in the document battle.

Gonzalez also admonished Adelson during his testimony in open court last year for not answering a routine question from Jacobs' lawyers.

The judge told Adelson he didn't get to argue with her. AP

ENTERTAINMENT

Moon lantern party in Albergue courtyard

ALBERGUE SCM is set to host its "Celebration of the Moon Lantern Festival" today from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the courtyard of the iconic building. The event, which celebrates the romantic full moon festival, will feature two live outdoor performances by Tong Chong Arts Troupe (Cantonese operatic songs) and the Portuguese



band, Sunny Side Up.

Organizers also say that festive food and drink, a lantern riddle-solving game, traditional rabbit lanterns for children and fortune fai-chun gifts will be offered during the celebratory evening.

Albergue SCM is launching the "Master Choi Chun Heng Chinese Calligraphy Art Exhibi-

tion" with a selection of around 30 calligraphy pieces on display from today until the end of the month. Revenue generated by the project will be donated to the Society for the Protection of Animals (Anima).

The institution has also prepared 300 snack boxes with traditional festive treats. The distribution of numbered tokens will

commence at 6 p.m., limited to one per person, while the boxes themselves will be available for collection between 7:15 p.m. and 8:15 p.m.

The courtyard is a fitting location for the full-moon party as it is home to the "Marriage Trees". The two trees growing in the courtyard have been intertwined for more than a century, and according to Albergue representatives, have been witness to countless marriage proposals.

The celebrations tonight are admission free.

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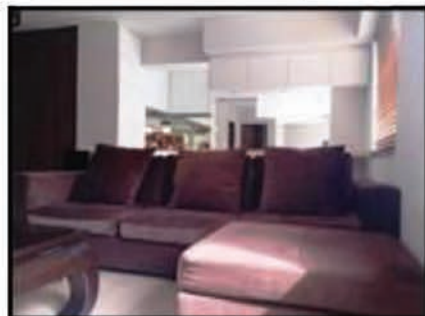
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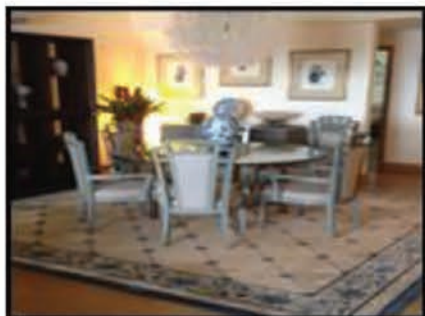


Rent Houston Court

(Ref: 15110549)
740sq. ft. HKD13,500

Situated in the heart of the village.

The apartment has a modern open plan kitchen, dining & living area, good size master bedroom with built in storage, separate walk in shower room, second bedroom has built in cabinets could be a large office or small double bedroom.

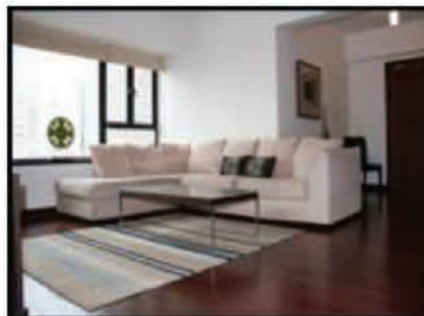


Lakeview - Macau

(Ref: 15080524)
2,950sq. ft. HKD 25,000

Bright and spacious 3 bedrooms, with a large dressing room, fully fitted air conditioned kitchen and separate utility room. Fully Furnished with a large front balcony over looking the Macau tower to Taipa. Convenient location.

Close to Grand Lisboa and Senado square. Viewings by appointment only.



Manhattan F Unit, Central Taipa

(Ref: 15090534)
1,720sq. ft. HKD 21,500

Large master bedroom with en suite bathroom. Two guest bedrooms (one single & one double). Each bedroom has plenty of free standing storage. Open plan living / dining room. Galley style modern kitchen with built white goods. Small laundry balcony. Resort style facilities; lap pool kids pool, kids.



One Central, Tower 7, Unit E Macau

(Ref: 15090533)
1,300sq. ft. HKD 26,000

Premier Apartment Building. Central Location. Bright & Airy. Newly furnished / Colour Palate Grey Blues, White & Yellow. Modern Fitted Kitchen, galley style. Available from December 2015. Newly furnished. Excellent club facilities.



One Central - Macau

(Ref: 15050509)
2,200sq. ft. HKD 28,000

This furnished 3 bedroom, 2 bathrooms apartment is bright and spacious with a large open planned living room/dining room. A great location within walking distance to MGM, Wynn and Mandarin Oriental. Directly linked to the shopping centre.



Tai Nin - Macau

(Ref: 15090536)
850sq. ft. HKD 8,500

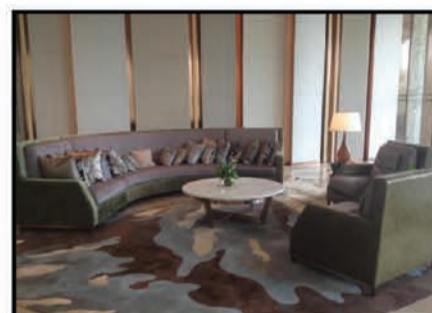
Lovely furnished one bedroom apartment near Senado Square. Bright open planned living room, dining room and kitchen. Great size double bedrooms built in wardrobe in bedroom. Fourth floor of a walk up building very close to cafes, shops, banks, bus stop, a unique chance to live in Central Macau.



La Baie Du Noble

(Ref: 15090541)
3,700sq. ft. HKD 45,000

Fabulous spacious two terrace duplex Asian contemporary furnished apartment for rent in Macau. The terrace is completely surrounded by a beautiful view with a some greenery which includes patio furniture and grill for entertaining. Lots of sunlight. It's includes: 3 on suite master bedroom, one office room, 4 bathrooms, Maids room, Laundry room washer and dryer, Good size kitchen with Granite tops, stainless steel appliances (oven).



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Paulo Coutinho

THE Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong and Macau continues to explore additional opportunities for engagement between Canadians and the local community of Macau, “thus resulting in the Pop-Up Canada! initiative,” which starts today in Macau for the very first time. “We hope to see more Canadians and local Macanese residents at Pop-Up Canada!” Mr Ian Burchett told the Times in an exclusive interview via email.

Mr Burchett speaks proudly of the “socially engaged” local Canadian community, most notably on the education front. However, the Canadian presence in the city has become noticeably bigger in the past five years or so, in terms of people, trade, investment and tourism, mirroring the evolution of the MSAR’s economy.

In the interview, Canada’s top representative in both SARs revealed the “informal establishment of the Canadian Club of Macau, which will begin hosting monthly events aimed at bringing Canadians together” – of whom, as he puts it, there “are more than you think.”

Macau Daily Times (MDT) - The best-known “brands” when you think of Canada in Macau would be the International School of Macau (TIS) and the fact that the first CE, Mr Edmund Ho, studied in Canada. What are you developing now?

James Ian Burchett (JIB) - Canada and Macau continue to enjoy tremendous people-to-people ties as well as strong bilateral business relations. The Consulate General of Canada in Hong Kong and Macau has been officially accredited to Macau since 1980, but our economies have been interacting for more than 200 years, mainly through trade and immigration. It is interesting to note that Canada, in fact, plays a big part in the daily lives of people living in Macau: a Canadian company from Toronto was involved in the design and implementation of Macau’s traffic control and surveillance systems!

Canadian education also plays a key role in the Macanese community. TIS is the first and only Canadian international school in Macau. TIS offers a curriculum of the Province of Alberta and Canadian values, and provides an education that prepares students to study at universities in Canada or anywhere in the world. TIS is highly popular among the local and expatriate communities in Macau, and in order to meet the increased demand, TIS recently began the construction of Phase II of its campus ... Phase II is scheduled to open in August 2016, just in time for the 2016-17 school year! Canada is also seeing a

Q&A J. IAN BURCHETT
CANADA’S CONSUL GENERAL

‘There are more ‘Canadians’ in Macau than you think’



Ian Burchett

rise in the number of Macanese students pursuing further studies in Canada: 282 study permits were issued in 2014.

Macau also represents an important market for Canadian companies in the environmental protection, building and en-

Approximately 4,000 Canadians live in Macau.

tertainment industries, as well as being a vital platform for Canadian companies, especially SMEs, to expand into mainland China as they look to develop their business in this region.

Canada continues to look for ways to further engage with the Macanese community, which is why we are hosting the first Pop-Up Canada! in Macau initiative this year from February 22 [today] to 24.

MDT - What do you expect of this promotional initiative – the first of its kind? Is this a one-off event or do you plan to organize it on a regular basis?

JIB - This year the events will mainly take place at the Grand Lapa Macau hotel, as well as at a few other venues across town. Modeled after the “pop-up store” concept, Pop-Up Canada! in Macau will give the Consulate General of Canada a presence

in Macau and offer the public an opportunity to take part in several events and seminars on Canada, including talks on studying in Canada, immigration to Canada, and Canadian tourism, trade, and investment. Since this is the first time we are organizing such an initiative, we hope that it will be well-received by the Macanese community and we look forward to organizing similar activities in Macau in the future.

MDT – According to available statistics, exports from Canada to Macau grew nine-fold from 2010 to 2014. This seems intimately related to the huge expansion in casinos and hospitality, would you agree?

JIB - In fact, according to Statistics Canada, Canada’s exports of goods to Macau grew 14-fold from 2010 to 2015, to CAD58 million [MOP337 million]! During the same period of time, fish and seafood exports to Macau grew 60 times to CAD4.8 million, of which 95 percent were imports of Canadian geoduck clams. Not surprising to those of us who travel frequently to Macau, turbojet parts also grew 16 times to CAD7 million. Of note, loading and unloading machinery in fact grew from zero to CAD12 million in 2015. Macau is an important export market for Canada in the environmental protection, building and entertainment industries. For example, Macau is Canada’s third-largest export market for amusement park equipment

– with total exports of over MOP24 million in 2014 alone; Canadian companies provided and installed Galaxy Macau’s Lazy River and Splashpad, The House of Dancing Waters’ stage waterproofing and water disinfection system, as well as the dome at Wynn Macau Kinetic Atrium.

MDT - Does this growth reflect in the Canadian expats’ presence in Macau? How large is the Canadian community here and how has it developed over past years?

JIB - There is an estimate that approximately 4,000 Canadians live in Macau. We are happy to note that Canadians in Macau are active and engaged in the community, increasingly so with the recent informal establishment of the Canadian Club of Macau, which will begin hosting monthly events aimed at bringing Canadians together. Information will soon be made available through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Aside from Canadians living in Macau, there are a lot of Canadians who are visiting Macau as tourists. Canadian visitor arrivals in Macau also registered year-on-year increases, representing the third-largest group of long-haul visitor arrivals in Macau.

MDT - How would you describe the local Canadian community compared, for instance, with HK’s?

JIB - Although, in terms of numbers, the number of Canadians living in Macau is smaller than that of Hong Kong [300,000], I am proud to say that the Canadian community in Macau is making other contributions to this dynamic city. Like typical Canadians, the Canadians in Macau are very much active in the community.

One excellent example would be the annual “Run of Hope.” Furthermore, not only are there an increasing number of Macanese students pursuing studies in Canada, there are already a number of academics in Macau who are Canadian alumni, as well as many senior representatives from government and private institutions who also have Canadian experience. There are more “Canadians” in Macau than you think!

MDT - How many hours or days a week do you spend thinking of Macau affairs? And what are the main issues or requests you usually deal with?

JIB - The Consulate General of Canada is regularly engaged with Canadians in Macau by providing regular consular services, such as citizenship and passport services. Our trade team also works regularly with Canadian and Macanese companies, providing them with assistance in terms of exploring partnership bilateral trade opportunities. We are eager to learn how we can become strong partners with Macau to further strengthen these ties.

MDT - What is your take on Beijing’s “One Belt, One Road” initiative?

JIB - The capital-intensive infrastructure projects foreseen under the “One Belt, One Road” initiative may offer opportunities for Canadian companies and large investors such as pension funds, but it’s still too early to determine exactly how Canadian companies might benefit. We’ll continue to monitor developments with a view to identifying and communicating such potential opportunities to Canadian businesses, and look forward to supporting our Macanese friends with this new initiative.

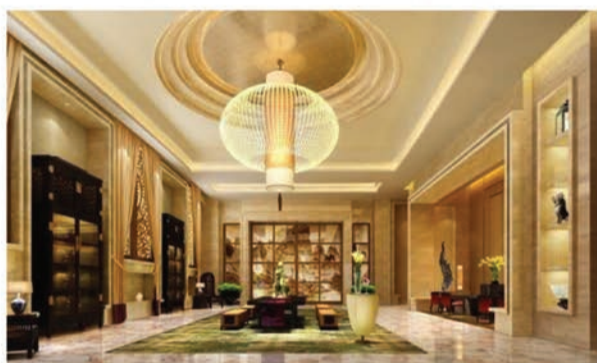
CANADA’S MIDDLE MAN IN THE SARs

PRIOR TO joining External Affairs and International Trade Canada in 1990, James Ian Burchett worked as a legislative assistant to a member of parliament and served in several government departments. Mr Burchett first came to China to serve as counsellor (public and cultural affairs) at the Canadian embassy in Beijing, and since then he has been involved with Asian affairs back at the Canadian Foreign Office headquarters. There he has

worked in divisions responsible for further advancing Canadian trade and economic interests with the Middle East and Gulf states, China, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea. J. Ian Burchett holds a BA in Political Science and a MA in Public Administration, and has been awarded two state distinctions for his services supporting Canadians abroad, namely in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks when he was serving at the NYC consulate.



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RETAIL

Gucci brand returns to growth



Pedestrians walk past a billboard advertisement for luxury brand Gucci, in Macau

Andrew Roberts

FRENCH luxury-goods maker Kering SA reported fourth-quarter revenue growth that beat analysts' estimates as the Gucci brand showed the first signs of a turnaround under Chief Executive Officer Marco Bizzarri and new creative director Alessandro Michele.

Sales climbed 8 percent on a comparable basis, Paris-based Kering said in a statement Friday. Analysts predicted growth of 4.1 percent, according to the median of 20 estimates. Gucci revenue advanced 4.8 percent, compared with the 1.5 percent growth analysts anticipated – the brand's strongest result in three years. The shares rose as much as 3 percent in early Paris trading.

Pressure has been building on Gucci – which accounts for nearly two-thirds of Kering's profit – to translate the buzz around Michele into sales. While the fourth quarter suggests Michele's debut collections are living up to their critical acclaim, it will probably take until the second half of 2016 to see if he has delivered as the full complement of his designs won't be in Gucci's boutiques until the third quarter.

"Gucci has come in with a significant number of new styles that are starting to turn heads," said Luca Solca, an analyst at Exane BNP Paribas. Michele's designs – which feature vintage styling and the brand's double-G logo – accounted for about 30 percent of Gucci's sales in the

quarter, Kering Chief Financial Officer Jean-Marc Duplax said on a call with reporters.

Security concerns following the November terror attacks in Paris failed to hold back luxury sales in Europe, where high tourist numbers and steadily rising demand from local customers buoyed growth, Kering said. Sales were also strong in Japan, up 14 percent last year, contrasting with poor market conditions in Hong Kong and Macau. Japan has been a bright spot for luxury-goods makers including LVMH and Hermes International SCA.

One disappointment was handbag maker Bottega Veneta, whose sales fell 3.1 percent in the quarter compared with the 3 percent growth predicted by analysts.

Bottega Veneta "continues to be impacted by its high sales exposure to Asia, and especially Hong Kong/Macau where the environment remains challenging," Berenberg analyst Zuzanna Pusz said in a note. The brand has been penalized by

■ Sales were strong in Japan, contrasting with poor market conditions in HK and Macau

high price gaps between Europe and Asia, where products cost more, according to analysts.

Watches were held back by sluggish demand and the surging Swiss franc, Kering said, yet that was offset by growth in jewelry, which experienced very high volumes in the fourth quarter.

Kering's full-year sales rose 15 percent to 11.6 billion euros, exceeding the 11.4 billion-euro median of analysts' estimates. Recurring operating income was 1.65 billion euros. **Bloomberg**



Vincent Ong

TOURISM

Sheraton's fast-tracked growth in Asia Pacific

Renato Marques

THE Sheraton Hotels & Resorts is expected to announce accelerated growth plans for the Asia Pacific region today, based on its ten-point plan designated "Sheraton 2020," which was announced in June last year. The plan is designed to "put Sheraton Hotels & Resorts firmly back into the global spotlight," according to the company.

As Vincent Ong, Senior Director - Brand Management of the Starwood Hotels & Resorts Asia Pacific, said during a presentation in Macau on Friday that was attended by the Times, "The bigger word is 'perso-

nalization'; it is all about promoting your own style."

Following the recent upgraded designation of Sheraton Macau to Sheraton Grand Macau, a title that Ong explains aims to classify the "best of the best," the new class of hotels plans to "meet and match the expectations of our guests, showcasing Sheraton's best properties," he said, adding that "[guest] expectations are changing."

Sheraton Macau was one of the first to be awarded with the title, and is one of more than a hundred premier hotels that the brand expects to elevate to "Grand" status by 2020. Currently there are 23 hotels with that status, 16 of

which are located in the Asia Pacific region. Those figures include the three properties that from today join the "Grand" tier: Sheraton Grand Shanghai Pudong, Sheraton Grand Guangzhou Huadu and Sheraton Grand Jakarta Gandaria City.

"As we complete the first year of our Sheraton 2020 [plan], initiatives are already underway to establish Sheraton as the hotel brand of choice everywhere," said Ong, before adding, "We are making tremendous progress in Asia Pacific, continuing to provide guests with effortless travel experiences, so they can experience more. That is our brand position."

corporate bits

WYNN RESORTS LISTED BY FORTUNE MAGAZINE

Wynn Resorts was honored as the highest-ranking casino resort in the hotel, casino and resort category of Fortune magazine's 2016 "World's Most Admired Companies" list, ranking third out of 13 internationally distinguished hospitality companies.

According to a press release, Wynn Resorts topped the category "Quality of Products/Services," having been chosen from among all international hotel companies. High marks for innovation, people management, quality of management and long-term investment were awarded to the company.

The U.S. business magazine works with top industry executives and analysts to



rate companies based on nine categories, ranging from financial soundness to social responsibility. The ranking of the "World's Most Admired

Companies" is conducted every year and the list provides a definitive report card on corporate reputations in various fields.

MGM CONTINUES 'MACAU OUTSTANDING TEENAGERS' SPONSORSHIP

MGM China will continue to sponsor "Macau Outstanding Teenagers," a campaign organized by the Young Men's Christian Association of Macau (YMCA).

The launch ceremony was held at MGM Macau on Saturday. In her speech, Ms. Kuan Sok Leng, General Secretary of YMCA, said this award demonstrates YMCA's social responsibility by accrediting passionate individuals whose impact has helped creating a wholesome environment for the younger generation to mature.

Grant Bowie, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of MGM China, said, "Through the years,



the Macau Outstanding Teenager winners have set exemplary models for our youth to follow, and we are delighted to continue to play a role in the process in providing such aspirations."

The judging panel will consist 30 social and community personalities from various fields and expertise. A total of 20 individuals will be selected from three

key aspects: "Personal Achievements", "Personal Endeavors" and "Involvement in the Community".

Once 50 finalists are selected, they will participate in different experimental activities such as social etiquettes, public speaking and community services, so as to enrich their experiences and to be more prepared for the final competition.

Six held in Spain court probe into ICBC bank

A Spanish judge has ruled that six executives of China's state-owned ICBC bank in Madrid should be detained pending a judicial probe into suspected money laundering and tax fraud, a court statement said Saturday.

Three Industrial and Commercial Bank of China officials were sent to jail while investigations continue. Three others were given the option of paying 100,000 euros (USD111,300) bail, the statement said.

Five executives were arrested Wednesday on suspicion of money laundering, crimes against Spain's tax authority and forgery. The sixth, who previously worked in ICBC's Madrid offices but now works in the Luxembourg branch, was nabbed Friday.

All court interviews were held with interpreters present and all six waived their right not to testify. The court statement said the bank continued to operate normally and Wednesday's search of its Madrid premises "took place within the strict framework of pre-trial investigations."

The Chinese embassy in Madrid said in a statement that the Chinese government "requires Chinese companies to maintain a strict compliance of the law." AP

Top securities regulator steps down amid turmoil

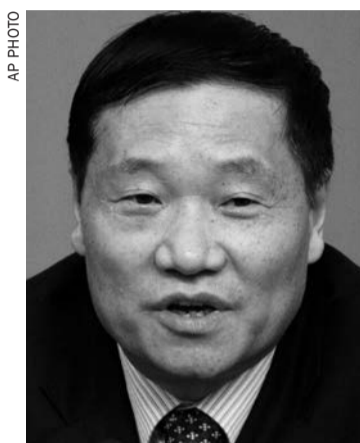
Didi Tang, Beijing

CHINA'S top securities regulator will step down following months of turmoil in Chinese stock markets that have battered faith in Beijing's economic management.

The departure of Xiao Gang, a legal expert with decades of experience in the finance industry, may help assuage public anger at the dramatic boom and bust, but doesn't address the market's underlying problems.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported Saturday that Xiao would be replaced by Liu Shiyu, chairman of the Agricultural Bank of China and a former deputy governor of China's central bank.

"Xiao Gang is worth no pity but he is destined to be a tragic figure, caught between pro-government and pro-market factions and left to take care of a mess from an unhealthy system," Beijing-based veteran financial commentator Shi Shusi said.



Xiao Gang

"His departure will not bring a clean era for China's capital, but at most a belated consolation for investors who have been hurt."

The capital market is where China's rivaling political forces have come into most intense clashes, Shi said. The unusual intervention by the Ministry of Public Security and investigations against securities firms following market meltdowns are proof that covert political forces within the Chinese government

had made waves, Shi said.

"As China transforms, the capital market is where political forces wrestle with each other and is where the conflicts play out," he said.

Fueled by cheerleading in the state press after officials said Chinese stocks should rise, the Shanghai and Shenzhen markets vaulted from late 2014, reaching a peak in June last year, then crumbled in several waves of panic selling that sent shockwaves around the world.

Officials prolonged the turmoil with draconian measures such as banning major shareholders in publicly traded companies from selling any shares and ordering state funds to buy. The bust hurt millions of neophyte Chinese investors who piled into the market when it was near its peak.

Analysts say Beijing's moves on stocks, as well as its halting steps to ease currency controls, show the tension between the ruling Commu-

nist Party's desire for market-oriented reform and its overriding objective of retaining absolute political control.

The Shanghai Composite Index closed at 2,860.02 on Friday, a decline of about 45 percent from its peak in June of about 5,178 and barely higher than late 2014, when the market started rising.

Liu, the new chief securities regulator, was trained in engineering at the prestigious Tsinghua University and started a career in the state banking industry in the late 1980s.

Xiao, who was appointed in March 2013, was particularly criticized for the mishandled introduction of a "circuit breaker" mechanism for the markets in January that halted trading when prices fall by a certain percentage.

It was meant to help stabilize Chinese stocks as authorities gradually withdrew their emergency support measures, but only added to the turmoil. AP

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CHINA'S ratio of debt to its economic size is seen climbing for at least another four years, underscoring the risks facing policy makers as they strive to prevent a deeper slowdown without triggering a credit blowout.

Seven out of 12 economists see the debt-to-gross-domestic-product ratio increasing through at least 2019, with four expecting a peak in 2020 or later, according to a Bloomberg News survey. Debt will peak at 283 percent of GDP, according to the median estimate of eight economists.

Policy makers grappling with the fallout from a credit binge after the global financial crisis are also being confronted by anemic demand for exports and an aging workforce, pushing economic growth to the slowest pace in a quarter of a century. With robust consumption and services struggling to pick up the slack from slowing investment and manufacturing, China's communist leaders are striving to put a floor under growth to ensure average expansion stays around 6.5 percent through 2020.

"We doubt the debt ratio will peak before 2020," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, a China economist at Capital Economics Ltd. in Singapore. "Our model puts the peak in the debt ratio in 2024, but the ratio could rise further beyond that if Chinese policymakers fail to implement the necessary structural reforms required to improve credit allocation."

Concerns over China's borrowing came to the fore last week, when a report showed the country's banks extended a record 2.51 trillion yuan (USD385 billion) of new loans in January. The increase in debt could pressure the country's credit rating, Standard & Poor's said on Tuesday, less than a week after the cost to insure Chinese bonds against default rose to a four-year high.

Underscoring the delicate balancing act between the desire to keep credit flowing, but not too fast, the central bank will boost the amount of reserves that must be locked away by some banks.

The move reinforced the view that the central bank is striving to prevent a repeat of the 2009-2010 credit blowout, said Tim Condon, head of Asian research at ING Groep NV in Singapore.

The tightening of liquidity for some lenders follows the monetary authority's recent announcement that it would adopt a so-called macro prudential assessment system that uses commercial banks' required-reserve ratios to



A woman speaks on her phone near a display highlighting the new Chinese bank notes at a bank in Beijing

Debt seen rising through 2019, peaking at 283 percent of GDP

help enforce financial stability.

Still, the PBOC is seeking to lower overall borrowing costs to underpin an economy that expanded at the slowest pace in a quarter century last year. To guide market interest rates lower, the PBOC last week provided cash through its Medium-term Lending Facility at 2.85 percent for six-month loans, down from 3 percent.

It is almost impossible to identify a specific debt-to-GDP level or time period that will "tip" the Chinese economy into a financial crisis, Goldman Sachs Group Inc.'s investment management division said in a January report. Comparing the magnitude and pace of the increase in China's debt-to-GDP ratio to those of other countries, it concluded China's increase is among the highest in recent history.

"Every major country with a rapid increase in debt has experienced either a financial crisis or a prolonged slowdown in GDP growth," wrote

analysts led by New York-based chief investment officer Sharmin Mossavar-Rahmani and Hong Kong-based investment strategist Ha Jiming.

Every major country with a rapid increase in debt has experienced either a financial crisis or a prolonged slowdown in GDP growth

ANALYSTS

"History suggests that China will face the same fate."

The paper compared China to five countries that experienced financial crises since

1990 - Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the U.S. and U.K. - and found China's increase in debt relative to GDP since 2008 was exceeded only by Thailand's binge from 1990 to 1997.

"Most also had lower levels of debt relative to GDP and, again with the exception of Thailand, were far richer than China at the time of their crises," it says.

The risk going forward is that China's growth targets are still too high and lead to higher fiscal deficits and debt, Standard & Poor's said last week. The nation's room for fiscal maneuver will shrink when potential problems such as deteriorating asset quality in the banking sector, it said.

While China has a high level of corporate debt, government debt isn't high, said Wang Yiming, deputy director at the Development Research Center of the State Council in a briefing last week. China's high savings rate is also supportive of higher investment, which may provide a

buffer to a higher debt-to-GDP ratio, said Tommy Xie, an economist with Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. in Singapore.

At the higher end of the spectrum, respondents Evans-Pritchard and Larry Hu, head of China economics at Macquarie Securities Ltd. in Hong Kong, see China's debt-to-GDP ratio peaking at about 300 percent of GDP. At the lower end, Nie Wen, a Shanghai-based economist at Huabao Trust, estimates it will peak at 250 percent.

"If China chooses the zombie bank/company mop up and prop up strategy, they will slow not only productivity but current and potential GDP," said Constance Hunter, chief economist at KPMG LLP in New York. "If they choose instead to take the heretofore unrecognized bad debts of the state-owned banks on the government balance sheet, a la Ireland, they will increase government debt but they won't have zombie banks and they are more likely to see a robust recovery." **Bloomberg**

AP PHOTO



Road workers remove a fallen tree blocking a road near Lami



People are splashed by a wave whipped up by the encroaching cyclone Winston in Labasa

Fijians told to stay inside after ferocious cyclone kills 6

Nick Perry, Wellington

FIJIANS were told to stay inside for a second straight night yesterday as officials scrambled to restore services and assess damage in the wake of a ferocious cyclone that left at least six people dead and destroyed hundreds of homes.

Winds from Cyclone Winston, which tore through the Pacific Island chain over the weekend, reached 285 kilometers per hour, making it the strongest storm in the Southern Hemisphere since record-keeping began, according to the Weather Underground website.

Although the weather calmed yesterday, a curfew was extended through early today and police were empowered to make arrests without a warrant to ensure order.

In a televised address to the nation yesterday, Prime Mi-

nister Voreqe Bainimarama said many people had been left without power, fresh water or communications.

"The damage has been widespread, homes have been destroyed, many low-lying areas have flooded, and many people have been left stunned and confused about what to do," he said.

He said that the police and military had been brought in to help with rescue operations and the general cleanup, and that government agencies were working overtime to clear roads and restore power.

"This is a time of sorrow, but it will also be a time of action," Bainimarama said. "We will stand united in the face of this disaster."

George Dregaso of Fiji's National Disaster Management Office said that two people on Ovalau Island died when the house they were sheltering in collapsed on

them, and that another man was killed on Koro Island, although it wasn't clear how.

Authorities also said three people on the main island of Viti Levu were killed in the storm, but didn't have more details.

Tourism Minister Faiyaz Siddiq Koya said that all tourists in Fiji were safe and that there was no significant damage to the majority of hotels on the main island. Fiji is a popular tourist destination, known for its beach resorts and scuba diving.

Officials were trying to establish communications and road access to the hardest-hit areas, and said they would not know the full extent of the damage and injuries until then.

Cyclone Winston hit Fiji on Saturday and moved westward overnight along the northern coast of Viti Levu. Fiji's capital, Suva, located in the southern part of the main island, was not

directly in the cyclone's path and avoided the worst of its destructive power.

"Truth be told, we've gotten off pretty lightly here in the capital," said Alice Clements, a spokeswoman for UNICEF. "It was still a pretty awful night. You could hear crashing trees and power lines, and popping rivets as roofs got lifted and ripped out."

She said there was foliage everywhere that looked like it had been put through a blender.

About 80 percent of the nation's 900,000 people were without regular power, although about one-third of them were able to get some electricity from generators, said Dregaso, the disaster office official. Landlines throughout Fiji were down, but most mobile networks were working.

Dregaso said there were 483 people who had evacuated from

their homes and were staying in 32 emergency shelters. He said he expected the number of evacuees to rise.

Authorities were urging people to remain indoors as they cleared fallen trees and power lines. They said that all schools would be closed for a week to allow time for the cleanup, and that three universities would be closed until further notice.

The government declared a 30-day state of natural disaster, giving extra powers to police to arrest people without a warrant.

The government said the curfew would end at 5:30 a.m. today.

"The curfew has been imposed to protect lives and protect property," Prime Minister Bainimarama said in his address.

Clements, the UNICEF spokeswoman, said there was particular concern for people on the northern part of the main island and on smaller islands. She said that many would have lost their homes and livelihoods, and that some tourist resorts on the outer islands may have been damaged.

The airport reopened yesterday to allow emergency flights, Dregaso said, after many flights had been canceled the day before. **AP**

AP PHOTO



Indian army soldiers conduct a flag march past damaged buildings at Rohtak, a day after being rocked by violence in Haryana state

Ashok Sharma, New Delhi

AS thousands of members of an underprivileged community in northern India continue to protest to demand government benefits, the more than 16 million people in India's capital are facing a water shortage as a result of the violent de-

monstrations, which have left at least 10 dead.

The protesters have damaged equipment that brings water from Munak canal in Haryana state to New Delhi, depleting the capital's water supply. New Delhi gets about 60 percent of its water from the neighboring state.

Arvind Kejriwal, De-

Deadly north India protests lead to New Delhi water shortage

lhi's chief minister, announced yesterday that schools in the capital would be closed Monday due to the water shortage. He also ordered the rationing of water to people's homes.

At least 10 people have been killed in firing on protesters by Indian security forces since the weeklong protests turned violent on Friday, Yashpal Singhal, the state's top police officer, told reporters yesterday. Another 150 protesters have been injured in clashes in various parts of Haryana. Sporadic violence was

reported in Haryana yesterday, with protesters setting a bank ATM and bank records on fire. Singhal said no major incidents of violence were reported in the state.

He also said paramilitary forces and irrigation engineers were trying to

restore the water flow from Munak canal to New Delhi.

The protesters, members of the lower-caste Jat agricultural community, are demanding benefits both at the federal and state levels, including guaranteed government

jobs or university spots. Talks Friday between community leaders and state government representatives failed to lead to an agreement.

The protesters are demanding 27 percent government job quotas or university spots for their community.

India's constitution includes a system of affirmative action for people in the lowest castes to help them overcome discrimination. The government has expanded the number of groups, including the Jat, qualifying for quotas. **AP**

■ The protesters are demanding 27 percent government job quotas or university spots for their community



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SECRETARY of State John Kerry said yesterday that a “provisional agreement” has been reached on a cease-fire that could begin in the next few days in Syria’s five-year civil war.

Kerry said he spoke in the morning with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to discuss terms of a cease-fire and the two now must reach out to the parties in the conflict.

He declined to go into the details of the agreement, saying it “is not yet done.” But he said he hoped President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin would talk soon and that after that, implementation could begin.

“The modalities for a cessation of hostilities are now being completed,” Kerry said. “In fact, we are closer to a cease-fire today than we have been. A cessation of hostilities... is possible over the course of these next hours.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry seemed to stop short of Kerry’s announcement. The ministry said Lavrov and Kerry spoke on the phone yesterday for a second day in a row and discussed “the modality and conditions” for a cease-fire in Syria that would exclude groups that the U.N. Security Council considers terrorist organizations. Fighting has intensified in Syria during recent weeks and an earlier deadline to cease mili-

SYRIA

Kerry: ‘Provisional agreement’ reached on ceasefire



In this photo released by the Syrian official news agency SANA, Syrian citizens gather at the scene where two blasts exploded in the pro-government neighborhood of Zahraa

tary activities was not observed. “Peace is better than more war,” Kerry said, standing next to Nasser Judeh, the foreign minister of Jordan, which hosts 635,000 Syrian refugees. “A political solution is better than then a futile attempt to try to find a military one that could

result in so many more refugees, so many more jihadists, so much more destruction, and possibly even the complete destruction of Syria itself.”

However, he reiterated the long-time U.S. position that any political solution to the conflict will not work if Syrian Presi-

dent Bashar Assad remains at the helm of the nation. “

On the ground in Syria, a pair of explosions ripped through the central city of Homs, killing at least 32 people and wounding dozens, according to activists and Syrian state TV.

The Homs blasts came amid

“The modalities for a cessation of hostilities are now being completed.”

JOHN KERRY

reports that Syrian government forces captured 31 villages in the northern province of Aleppo from the extremist Islamic State group. Syrian troops have been on the offensive in different parts of the country under the cover of Russian airstrikes.

The television report said yesterday’s blasts struck in the pro-government neighborhood of Zahraa — a frequent target for similar explosions. The report quoted Homs governor Talal Barrazi as saying that 32 people were killed and dozens of others wounded. **AP**

USA

Trump wins South Carolina primary as Bush drops out of race

John McCormick

DONALD Trump, the brash New York billionaire who has upended all the rules of modern campaigning, won Saturday’s South Carolina primary in a decisive fashion that shrinks the prospects of his Republican presidential rivals to stop his march to the nomination.

It also brought an end to the campaign of Jeb Bush, who recently had become Trump’s biggest antagonist on the campaign trail. The former Florida governor gave an emotional speech, highlighting the importance of the nation over the individual.

“I firmly believe the American people must entrust this office to someone who understands that whoever holds it is a servant, not the master — someone who will commit to that service with honor and decency,” he

said.

“I’m proud of the campaign we’ve run to unify our country,” Bush said. “But the people of Iowa and New Hampshire and South Carolina have spoken.” Bush, the one-time favorite for the no-

■ **Bush brought his brother onto the campaign trail but it did little to improve his fortunes**

mination, had staked the future of his campaign on a strong showing in South Carolina, a state his father and brother both won on the way to the White House. Bush brought his

brother, former President George W. Bush, onto the campaign trail last week in South Carolina, but it did little to improve his fortunes.

The win slingshots Trump, who has successfully tapped into the anxieties and frustrations of voters, into the Nevada Republican caucuses on Tuesday and the so-called Super Tuesday states that vote March 1 and also have a heavy southern cast.

“As people drop out, I’m going to get a lot of those votes,” Trump said in his victory speech. His opposition remained splintered, with Senators Ted Cruz of Texas and Marco Rubio of Florida jockeying for second place, according to early returns. The results made clear how difficult it will be to stop Trump as long as the field remains as large as it is.

With 87 percent of precincts reporting, Trump

had 33.1 percent, followed by Rubio at 22.2 percent and Cruz at 21.8 percent. Bush had 8.2 percent, with Ohio Governor John Kasich at 7.8 percent and retired neurosurgeon Ben Carson at 6.9 percent.

“After tonight this has become a three-person race and we will win the nomination,” Rubio told supporters. “Here in South Carolina, the message is pretty clear: this country is ready for a new generation of conservative leaders.”

In his speech, Trump spoke about the difficulty of running for president. “It’s tough. It’s nasty. It’s mean. It’s vicious. It’s beautiful,” he said. “When you win, it’s beautiful.”

Trump’s win follows a second-place finish in Iowa on Feb. 1 and a dominant victory in New Hampshire on Feb. 9, making it the latest example of the anti-establishment energy that has fueled this year’s campaign.



Donald Trump

In a week of intensive campaigning here, Trump did things that would make a more traditional politician blanch. He sparred with Pope Francis, called for a boycott of Apple Inc., hinted that Boeing might pull some of its 8,000 manufacturing jobs out of the state and accused Cruz of lying and campaign dirty tricks. Southern gentility it was not, yet voters couldn’t seem to get enough.

The closeness of the results for the candidates behind Trump may mean South Carolina won’t significantly winnow the field before Nevada. Trump’s casino indus-

try ties and ownership of property in Las Vegas is believed to give him an edge there.

Trump dominated the vote statewide and exit polls showed he won most major demographic groups. Even among born-again Christians, Trump beat Cruz, 31 percent to 27 percent.

He also won the largest share of the vote among those who consider themselves moderates and those who self-identified as somewhat conservative, while Cruz beat Trump, 37 percent to 27 percent, among those who said they’re very conservative.

Bloomberg

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what's ON



SEASONS OF PROSPERITY
TIME: 6pm-10:30pm
(every 30 minutes, 10 minutes per session)
Creative Creatures
TIME: 24 hours
UNTIL: February 22, 2016
VENUE: Outdoor Lagoon Area of the Venetian Macau

CELEBRATION OF THE LANTERN FESTIVAL 2016
TIME: 6:30pm-9pm
VENUE: Albergue SCM
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2852 2550

FORMER HOME OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADER YE TING
TIME: 10am-6pm daily
(Except Wednesdays, open on public holidays)
VENUE: 76, Rua Almirante Costa Cabral
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8399 6699

MACAU GRAND PRIX MUSEUM & WINE MUSEUM
TIME: 10am-8pm daily (Except Tuesdays)
VENUE: Rua Luis Gonzaga Gomes, 431, basement (Tourism Activities Centre-CAT)
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 8798 4108 / 2833 3000

MACAU SCIENCE CENTRE
TIME: 10am-6pm daily
(Except Thursdays, open on public holidays)
VENUE: Macau Science Centre, Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen
ADMISSION: Exhibition Centre MOP25; Planetarium MOP60-80
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2888 0822

THE MASTERY OF SHIPBUILDING
- FISHING JUNK MODELS BY WAN CHUN
TIME: 10am-6pm
(Closed on Sundays and public holidays)
Until: April 9, 2016
VENUE: Gallery of the Historical Archives of Macau, Avenida do Conselheiro Ferreira de Almeida N° 91 - 93, Macau
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2859 2919
ADMISSION: Free

NEW ART PEOPLE PROJECT 2016 POP UP SHOP FOR SOMETHING-SI-WAI'S CLOTHING EXPERIMENT EXHIBITION
TIME: 12pm-7pm
(Closed on Tuesdays, open on public holidays)
UNTIL: March 27, 2016
VENUE: No Cruzamento da Avenida do Coronel Mesquita com a Avenida Almirante Lacerda Macau
ADMISSION: Free
ENQUIRIES: (853) 2853 0026

Offbeat

SELFIES TAKEN WITH STOLEN KINDLE SHOW UP IN CLOUD

Los Angeles police say a photo they circulated of two people taken with a stolen Kindle has led to its return. Police released the photo last week that had uploaded automatically to the owner's cloud account. It showed a photo of a man and a woman who apparently visited church on Ash Wednesday because she had a smudge of ash on her forehead. Police say a few hours later the 26-year-old man in the picture returned the Kindle, and it has been returned to the owner. The woman in the photo was the man's mother, who police say had nothing to do with the theft. Police Capt. Paul Vernon says there was family pressure on the man to return the tablet because his mother was in the picture. Police say they'll seek a misdemeanor charge for the man. AP

TV canal macau

13:00	TDM News (Repeated)
13:30	News (RTPi) Delayed Broadcast
14:30	RTPi Live
16:50	Castle S.5
17:40	Trail of Lies (Repeat)
18:30	Contraponto (Repeated)
19:30	Soap Oepra
20:30	Main News, Financial & Weather Report
21:00	TDM Sports
22:10	Trail of Lies
23:00	TDM News
23:30	UEFA Champions League 2015/2016 Magazine Programme
00:05	Main News, Financial & Weather Report (Repeated)
00:40	RTPi Live

cinema

CINETEATRO

18 FEB - 24 FEB

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS: ROAD CHIP_
ROOM 1
7.30 pm
Director: Walt Becker
Starring: Jason Lee, Jessica Ahlberg, Josh Green
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 92min

MERMAID_
ROOM 1
2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.30 pm
Director: Stephen Chau
Starring: Deng Chao, Show Lo, Zhang Yu Qi
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 92min

FROM VEGAS TO MACAU III_
ROOM 2
2.30, 4.30, 7.30, 9.30 pm
Director: Andrew Lau, Wong Jing
Starring: Chow Yun-fat, Andy Lau, Nick Cheung, Jacky Cheung
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 112min



CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON: SWORD OF DESTINY_
ROOM 3
2.15, 4.00, 5.45, 9.45 pm
Director: Yuen Woo-Peng
Starring: Donnie Yen, Michelle Yeoh
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 120min

THE MONKEY KING 2_
ROOM 3
7.30 pm
Director: Pou-Soi Cheang
Starring: Aaron Kwok, Gong Li, Feng Shaofeng
Language: Cantonese (Cantonese/English)
Duration: 120min

MACAU TOWER

04 FEB - 02 MAR

THE GOOD DINOSAUR_
2.30, 4.45, 7.15, 9.30 pm
Director: Peter Sohn
Language: English (Cantonese)
Duration: 93min

this day in history



Patty Hearst

1974 HEARST 'RANSOM' PROVOKES VIOLENCE

There have been near-riots in Los Angeles as the food distribution demanded as a ransom for kidnapped newspaper heiress, Patty Hearst, turned into farce.

The USD2 million (£870,000) food handout has been called the most bizarre ransom ever paid, and was in response to demands from Miss Hearst's kidnapers, the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA).

Distribution points were set up in slum areas throughout Los Angeles and San Francisco at the request of Randolph Hearst, Miss Hearst's father and the son of flamboyant tycoon William Randolph Hearst.

Long queues formed as up to 1,000 people gathered to collect bags containing turkey, bread, milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables.

The handouts were organized through charitable organizations, but in at least two of the food banks, fighting broke out and there were clashes with the organizers and police.

In Oakland, California, the 5,000-strong crowd grew angry when organizers threw food from a window to them as they waited below. One policeman was stabbed and one man in the crowd was knocked unconscious as people began throwing cans of food back again.

Many of those who were meant to benefit turned down the food aid, saying they were horrified at the SLA's tactics. "I'm not a wealthy person, but if I needed some food I wouldn't accept that food," said one woman. "That's a lousy way to get food, you know, at the expense of other people's happiness."

"I wouldn't accept it," said another resident of one of the poorer areas of Los Angeles. "I just value human life a little higher than a bag of groceries." The SLA's demand for the handouts came accompanied by a taped appeal from Patricia Hearst herself earlier this month.

Miss Hearst has been held captive for over two weeks by the shadowy underground group. In the tape, she sobbed and told her parents her captors were "perfectly willing to die for what they do".

She begged, "I want to get out of here, but the only way is if you do what they say and do it quickly." The organization of today's food distribution, however, was dismissed by another tape recording yesterday - the fourth sent by the SLA.

In the tape, which contained a short recording of Miss Hearst's voice, a member of the gang calling himself Cinque described Mr Hearst's efforts as "a few crumbs".

He demanded a further \$4m (£2.6m) in food handouts within one week.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

Randolph Hearst agreed to pay the extra \$4m - but only once his daughter was released.

While negotiations over the ransom continued, the SLA was apparently brainwashing Patty Hearst into accepting their ideas.

Finally, in April 1974 she was caught on closed circuit television helping them to rob a bank.

She went on the run, but was caught by the FBI. After a sensational trial, she was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment, but was released after three years. She was pardoned in January 2001 by President Clinton.

Hearst married her police bodyguard, Bernard Shaw, and now lives in Connecticut with two daughters.

Six of the SLA's 11 members died two months after the kidnapping in a police shootout. Among them was leader Donald "Cinque" DeFreeze.

The remaining five members lived quietly under assumed names for over 20 years, until the FBI tracked them down. The last SLA fugitive, James Kilgore, was arrested in Cape Town in South Africa in 2002. All are now in jail.

YOUR STARS

Aries Mar. 21-Apr. 19 Reversal of fortune takes a lot less than you think...

Taurus April 20-May 20 There's no point in telling you to avoid impulse buys...

Gemini May 21-Jun. 21 Even your closest colleagues don't know you well enough to intuit your hopes and wishes...

Cancer Jun. 22-Jul. 22 If dealing with others is hard for you, you'll get some practice. You have so many things that are begging for completion...

Leo Jul. 23-Aug. 22 While others socialized, you intellectualized. And now you're seeing the pay off...

Virgo Aug. 23-Sept. 22 You need a good night's sleep to deal with whatever comes at you. Having a good or bad day is what hangs in the balance...

Libra Sep.23-Oct. 22 You're feeling dual natured. On the one hand, you have a lot of thinking to do. On the other, you have energy to burn...

Scorpio Oct. 23 - Nov. 21 If you're a gambler, that old itch returns. If you're not, you can't fathom why some people take the risks they do...

Sagittarius Nov. 22-Dec. 21 Haven't you learned your lesson? There's no point in having deep conversations with certain colleagues...

Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 19 Some people want personal service but others expect you to cut to the chase. Keep the chatting to a minimum today...

Aquarius Jan. 20-Feb. 18 Every day can't be at the top of the scale. If you're the creative type, you need every project to be a sizzling affair...

Pisces Feb.19-Mar. 20 It's a capricious sort of day. Everything is mutable, even your energy level. One moment you're ready to take on the world...

THE BORN LOSER by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

Sudoku puzzles categorized by difficulty: Easy, Easy+, Medium, and Hard. Each puzzle is a 9x9 grid with some numbers pre-filled.

WEATHER

Weather forecast table with columns for MIN, MAX, and CONDITION. Includes sections for CHINA and WORLD with cities like Beijing, Harbin, Shanghai, Moscow, Frankfurt, Paris, London, and New York.

CROSSWORDS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a 'Friday's solution' section with the filled-in grid and the words: SHALIT, RISE, MOSS, EELER, EMITS, EMIT, PRONE, SPEC, SALA, TRUISM, SNAPSHOT, CHAPEAU, INS, NORAD, SLANT, RAS, BAAL, THING, FIRE, CRT, TRIBE, SIENA, DODAD, ALI, MALAY, STA, ALOHAS, TNIT, URNS, TRULY, NEVE, RETE, ENRON, TSEE, ERIC, DELES.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

List of useful telephone numbers: Emergency calls 999, Fire department 28 572 222, PJ (Open line) 993, PJ (Picket) 28 557 775, PSP 28 573 333, Customs 28 559 944, S. J. Hospital 28 313 731, Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333, Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300, IACM 28 387 333, Tourism 28 333 000, Airport 59 888 88. Also includes Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283, Water Supply - Report 1990 992, Telephone - Report 1000, Electricity - Report 28 339 922, Macau Daily Times 28 716 081.

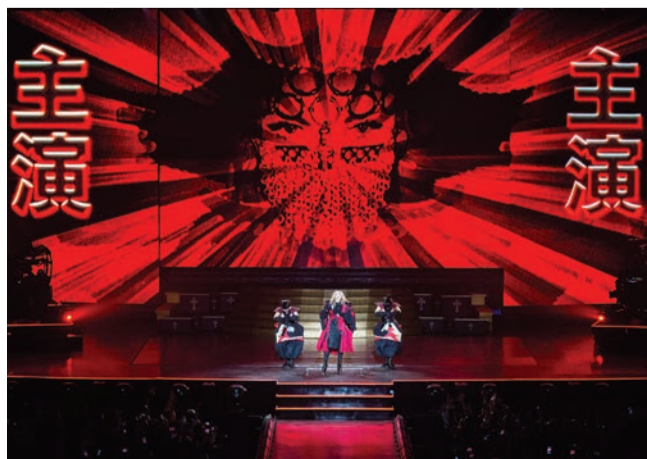
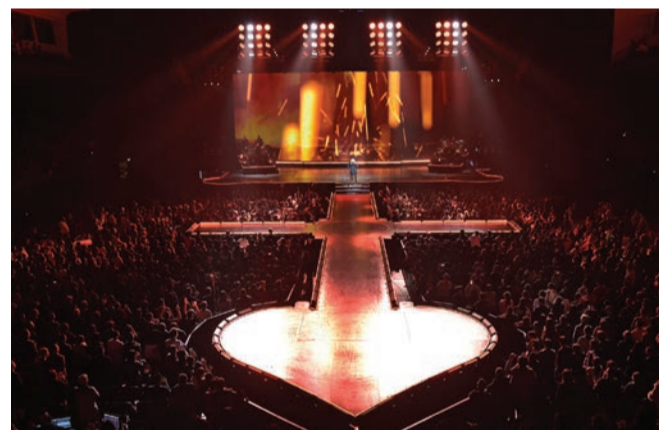
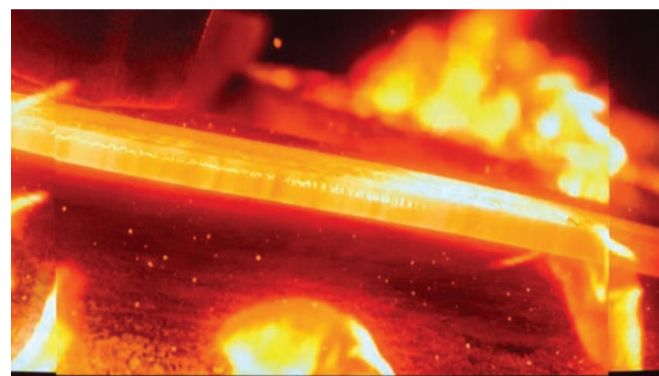


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Madonna shows a hit in 'remarkable' Macau



THOUSANDS OF Madonna fans converged on the Studio City Event Center (SCEC) over the weekend to see the Queen of Pop's two debut performances in Macau as part of her worldwide "Rebel Heart Tour."

The Times attended Saturday's concert, which started at 10.35 p.m. in the crowded 5,000-seat SCEC. Madonna performed some of her all-time hits, including "Like a Virgin," "Material Girl," and the lead songs from her Rebel Heart album.

During a pause between acts, Madonna sat on the stage and said to the audience: "I've never been anywhere quite like Macau before; it's remarkable and it is special. It feels intimate and grand. It feels small and it feels... not small." Madonna's Saturday performance in Macau also featured a surprise entrance from Hong Kong Cantopop singer Eason Chan, who took to the stage and danced alongside the musical legend. Madonna uttered, "Oh shit!" to roars of applause, as Chan fell over while dancing. Madonna ended Saturday's concert in Cotai wrapped up in a Macau flag, as she did in HK with the Bauhinia jacket.

According to a press release issued by Melco Crown, Madonna's two performances attracted numerous Asian celebrities, including Aaron Kwok, Miriam Yeung, Charlene Choi, Christy Chung and award-winning actress Carina Lau. Also present were celebrated couples Simon Yam and Qi Qi, and Leo Ku and Lorraine Chan.

Graham Dunbar, Geneva

Blatter era ends as scandal-hit FIFA set to elect new leader

THE Sepp Blatter era at FIFA is set to finally end on Friday when soccer's scandal-scarred world body picks a new president after nine months of crisis.

An election meeting designed to give FIFA a fresh start with a new leader could yet be overshadowed by its criminally corrupt past.

Voters return to Zurich this week unsure who is the next target of federal law enforcement agencies in the United States and Switzerland, who have sent FIFA into meltdown with waves of arrests, extraditions and guilty pleas.

Swiss prosecutors could decide this week is best to meet key witnesses in their widening case. Many soccer officials are making possibly their last working trip to Switzerland until May 2019, when the next scheduled FIFA election should be held in Zurich.

At the last election in May, Blatter won a fifth presidential term two days after FIFA's favored five-star hotel in Zurich and its own headquarters were raided. The pressure of criminal investigations soon forced Blatter from his beloved FIFA in his 41st year on the payroll.

Now, leaders of FIFA's 209 member federations visit the tiny Swiss city again to elect a successor for the now-banned 79-year-old who has been president since 1998. The winner will be just the fourth elected FIFA chief in more than 50 years.

Two front-runners have emerged in a five-candidate contest: Asia's soccer leader, Sheikh Salman of Bahrain, and Gianni Infantino, the Swiss general secretary of European governing body UEFA.

The other candidates are: Former FIFA vice president Prince Ali of Jordan, who lost to Blatter in May; former FIFA official Jerome Champagne of France; and South African businessman



In this May 29, 2015 file photo FIFA president Sepp Blatter (right) walks past Prince Ali (left) and UEFA President Michel Platini (center) during the 65th FIFA Congress held in Zurich. The Blatter era is set to finally end on Friday when FIFA elects a new president

Tokyo Sexwale, once an inmate of Robben Island prison with Nelson Mandela.

Infantino acknowledged that police could hit FIFA for the fourth time in nine months. "They know what is best for their work to be done in the most efficient way," Infantino told The Associated Press in a recent interview. "If I'm elected president of FIFA, what they can count on [is] not 100 but 200 percent with me to clean and to put anyone in jail who has done anything bad for football."

Sheikh Salman suggests government agencies have tried to in-

fluence FIFA politics. That view is shared by Blatter and Russian President Vladimir Putin, who claimed the U.S. wants the 2018 World Cup taken from his country.

"Choosing the time and place during an election or an [executive committee] meeting," Sheikh Salman told the AP this month of previous police raids, "I think this raises a lot of doubts on why, and leave people a bit suspicious on the intentions."

The Bahraini royal was "absolutely" sure FIFA did enough since May to deserve being left in peace this week. FIFA also hopes so, and aims to persuade the U.S.

Department of Justice that it is a victim of systemic corruption and should not be indicted.

So, on Friday, the 209 members can also vote through wide-ranging reforms to restructure FIFA. These would dilute the president's authority, empower FIFA's staff and increase oversight by independent experts.

If FIFA was indicted, it would join 41 soccer and marketing officials, plus marketing agencies, who have been charged or pleaded guilty so far in the sprawling U.S. case. Blatter, who cannot be extradited from Switzerland, is a confirmed target.

American investigators have focused on bribery in North and South America valued at USD200 million for awarding commercial rights for continental competitions. They also alleged cash-for-votes paid through a FIFA account linked to 2010 World Cup host South Africa.

Swiss prosecutors began by searching for money laundering in the 2018-2022 World Cup bid contests won by Russia and Qatar. Liaising with American counterparts, they went far beyond that brief to target all FIFA business.

Last September, a Swiss criminal case was opened against Blatter for mismanagement of FIFA money. It led FIFA's ethics committee to ban both Blatter and Platini for eight years.

Even if barred from the election hall, Blatter has been an election factor taking calls from voters seeking advice, he told a French radio station this week. "Vote with your conscience. Vote for who you find good," said Blatter, who has criticized Infantino in interviews.

A plausible scenario sees Sheikh Salman and Infantino with significant support in the first-round ballot, yet short of up to 140 votes needed for outright victory, and maybe fewer than the 105-plus tally which could persuade rivals to concede ahead of a second vote.

By Wednesday, the election show is in downtown Zurich where FIFA will also open its USD200 million museum this week. Perhaps police and Blatter will join them. **AP**

OLYMPICS

Rio swim venue may not be ready for April test event

Stephen Wade, Rio de Janeiro

OFFICIALS are preparing a Plan B in case the main swimming venue for the Rio de Janeiro Olympics is not ready for a test event in April.

Cornel Marculescu, the executive director of FINA, said the event from April 15-20 could be moved to the nearby diving venue, which also contains a 50-meter pool.

"There are still a lot of things to do," Marculescu told The Associated Press. "We need to install an artificial ventilation system for the pool deck to make

sure there is enough air circulation, that it's not too hot or cold."

Marculescu said the pool would be ready when the Olympics open on Aug. 5.

The venues for swimming, diving, water polo, and synchronized swimming have been among the most contentious issues for games organizers.

FINA has been openly critical of Rio Mayor Eduardo Paes for cutting seating in the main swimming venue, and for declining to install a roof on the remodeled diving venue. Paes responded that many of the 28 federations that oversee summer Olympics



Rio de Janeiro's Mayor Eduardo Paes, jokes with a boy next to a pool at the Maria Lenk Aquatics Center which will host the synchronized swimming and diving competitions during the 2016 Olympic Games

sports were too demanding, putting an undue burden on organizers.

"Each federation wants

to have the best conditions possible," Marculescu said.

"We're not anymore in a

position to complain that we don't have this, we don't have that," he said, adding, "We are now at the stage to do the best with what we have. I have no doubt we will have great Olympics here."

South America's first Olympics have been plagued with many problems including deep budget cuts, severe water pollution in venues for sailing, rowing and canoeing, and now the Zika virus. However, construction delays have seldom been an issue.

But in the last several months, snags have occurred in building the venues

for tennis, equestrian, and track cycling.

The Rio newspaper O Globo reported Paes warned the International Olympic Committee there was an "elevated risk" that a subway line extension will not be ready for the games.

The line, which costs about 10.3 billion Brazilian reals (USD2 billion), will connect the Copacabana and Ipanema beach areas with the western suburb of Barra da Tijuca, the location of the main Olympic Park. O Globo said the main obstacle was a delay in getting additional funding. **MDT/AP**

opinion

Rear Window

Severo Portela



LOTUS VS BAUHINIA

Apparently, the opening schedule of the bridge over the Pearl River Delta has been compromised by a set of defective pillars, thus delaying the long dreamed connectivity between the SARs of Macau and Hong Kong. This slowdown could be cast as metaphor of the drifting course Macau and its sister SAR seem to be on these days: a soft adjustment to the right margin and hard adjustment on the left bank.

In Macau, the adjustment process in the gaming sector is going further up - or down depending on the perspective - and the pace seems to be mandatory. Casino revenue declined during the golden week by an average of 20pct, despite the number of visitors increasing by 4.3pct, as highlighted by Nomura's gaming analyst, Richard Huang, quoted by Bloomberg: "The growing number of tourists as well as high hotel occupancy rate don't directly lead to the improvement of gambling revenue, as the visitation growth is mainly driven by tourists with weaker spending power." Hong Kong registered a drop of 12pct in the same period.

This is the soft adjustment. Not only could Macau do without Central Government special support policy (should the MSAR register a fall in arrivals as was announced back in January by the head of the Liaison Office, Li Gang), but it also managed to keep the slump under the unofficial forecast. The numbers are going down as the drive of the anti-corruption mood goes up and China's GDP growth slows. Anything out of this frame, like the positive outlooks for the market based on wishful thinking, is voodoo economics. Doctor Pangloss would be viewed by the Macau prediction industry as an unrepentant pessimist.

So, again, this is soft adjustment. Government revenues from the casino industry will become less and less, such that spending will no longer be a matter of chance and will become a matter of choice. We do have to build a vanity fire and some window dressing to show the world a happy "ville radieuse," don't we?

Now we travel east over the PRD to Hong Kong and its brand of adjustment... the rough one. As the number of visitors from the mainland has been solidly decreasing since the Umbrella Movement, retail sales overall declined 3.7pct. From the hardest-hit jewelry and luxury gifts houses to the humblest of the food stalls in Mong Kok. It was in vibrant Mong Kok that officials trying to clear the area of CNY illegal traders clashed with fish ball hawkers. The clashes were upgraded to riots - some believe them to be the worst since the Star Ferry riots of the 60s - because of the fueling "localist" Hong Kong indigenous brought via social media to the battlefield around Langham Place. Ironically, this is the spot - 555 Shanghai Street Mong Kong - where we can see the amazing statue of the Two Jiang, one holding a Red Book the other a Mobile Phone. The Madam Jiang Shuo piece is also known as Red Guards - Going Forward! Making Money!

Forget that the riot at its zenith involved no more than a few hundred, let's just press forward to evaluate the follow up. Lau Siu-kai from the Chinese Association of HK and Macau Studies, a think-tank close to Beijing, suggested, in the wake of the Mong Kok civil unrest, that Article 23 should be invoked; Apple Daily says the Central Government classifies the localist groups as separatists; Zhang Xiaoming, director of the Chinese government Liaison Office, said that the incident contained "terrorist tendencies".

However, minimal should be the detention of Scholarism and Occupy Central's Derek Lam, albeit he says he was just an onlooker. In a bad dream, this could be a method to strike the Umbrella Movement nonviolent agenda by placing an activist in a scenario of... violence. Not so sharp in its genes but effective, even though this narrative in the last instance calls for the intervention of enforcement, courts and media. Yes, media to write a mo(u)rning post.

THE BUZZ HARYANTO BECAMES INDONESIA'S FIRST FORMULA 1 DRIVER

Formula One team Manor has appointed Indonesia's Rio Haryanto as one of its race drivers for the coming season.

The 23-year-old Haryanto will become the first Indonesian to compete in F1 and joins Germany's Pascal Wehrlein in an all-rookie lineup for the season that begins March 20 in

Melbourne, Australia.

"Melbourne will be a huge moment for me, my country, supporters and fans and I want to thank everyone who's been with me since I started in single-seaters; 2016 is my chance to reward that faith and represent Asia in F1," Haryanto said in a team statement.



Station	Air quality
Roadside	65-95 Moderate
High Density Residential Area	65-95 Moderate
Ambient	65-95 Moderate

SOURCE: DSMG

USA

Seven die in 'random' Michigan shootings; suspect held



Police meet yesterday at Kalamazoo Valley Community College

A gunman drove in and around a western Michigan city randomly shooting people in the parking lots of an apartment complex, a car dealership and a restaurant and killing at least seven, including a 14-year-old girl, authorities said.

A 45-year-old man was arrested yesterday in downtown Kalamazoo following a massive manhunt after the shootings began early Saturday evening, authorities said.

A 14-year-old girl was among five people fatally shot outside a Cracker Barrel restaurant, said Kalamazoo County Undersheriff Paul Matyas, while a father and son were killed at the dealership. A woman who was shot multiple times at an apartment complex was in serious condition yesterday, Matyas said, correcting an earlier statement in which he'd said nine people had been shot.

Matyas said earlier that authorities did not believe the shootings were targeted at specific people, describing them as "our worst case scenario."

"These are random murders," he said. He described a terrifying rampage

that began about 6 p.m. in the parking lot of the apartment complex in Richland Township on the eastern edge of the Kalamazoo County, where the woman was shot and seriously wounded. About four hours later and 15 miles away, the father and son were fatally shot while looking at cars. Fifteen minutes after that, five people were shot in the parking lot of the Cracker Barrel along Interstate 94, including the teenager.

The suspect was arrested about 12.40 a.m. [US time], authorities said. Matyas told WWMT-TV that the man did not resist when approached by law enforcement officers, and that weapons were found in his vehicle.

"The threat to the public is over," Matyas said.

Kalamazoo, with a population of about 75,000, is about 160 miles west of Detroit. It is home to Western Michigan University and the headquarters of popular craft beer maker Bell's Brewery. The city also is known for the anonymously funded Kalamazoo Promise program, which has paid college tuition of students who graduate from Kalamazoo Public Schools for more than a decade. AP

THE DECISIVE MOMENT

Xinhua/Ou Dongqu



A villager walks beside a damaged house after a fire in Wenquan Village, located at southwest China's Guizhou Province. A fire broke out Saturday evening in the village, affecting 120 people and damaging more than 60 houses.

WORLD BRIEFS

INDIA Hundreds of security forces imposed a curfew and were ordered to fire without warning in a bid to quell protests by members of an underprivileged community demanding government benefits in a northern state, where at least six people have died in clashes. More on p12

MALAYSIA Australia warned yesterday that terrorists may be plotting attacks in and around Kuala Lumpur. The Australian High Commission in Malaysia said in a travel advisory note that there was an ongoing terrorism threat in Malaysia, noting that authorities there have arrested a number of people allegedly involved in planning attacks.



FIJI Most of the country was without electricity yesterday and residents were told to stay inside for a second straight night as officials scrambled to restore services and assess damage in the wake of a ferocious cyclone that left at least six people dead and destroyed homes. More on p12

SYRIA The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for a triple blast in a Damascus suburb that killed at least 22 people. The Aamaq news agency, which is affiliated with the group, said two IS fighters detonated a car bomb before blowing up their explosive belts in Sayyida Zeinab, a Shiite neighborhood.

UKRAINE About 1,000 nationalists rallied in central Kiev to demand the ouster of the government, which came to power two years ago following months of protests.

USA Protesters are preparing to assemble in more than 30 cities to lash out at the FBI for obtaining a court order that requires Apple to make it easier to unlock an encrypted iPhone used by a gunman in December's mass shootings in Southern California.